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THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF REWARDS.

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S E R M O N

DELIVERED AT THE CIRCUS,

Edinburgh,

ON

LORD'S DAY EVENING, OCT. 13, 1799.

BY
ANDREW FULLER.

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SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE CIRCUS, EDINBURGH.

GAL. vi. 7, 8.

Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

COMMON subjects my brethren are the most important, and need to be most inculcated. We are apt to think we have heard enough of them, and can expect but little if any farther improvement from them. But such imaginations are founded in mistake. Though, generally speaking, we assent to the important truth which is here suggested, yet there are but few of us who feel its force, or properly act under its influence.

The solemn warning here given is not unnecessary. Perhaps there is nothing to which depraved creatures are more addicted, though nothing be more dangerous than *self deception*. It is from this predilection in favour of something

that shall prophesy good concerning them, that the truth is disrelished, and those doctrines and systems of religion which flatter their pride and cherish their security, are so eagerly imbibed. The human heart loves to be soothed. The pleasing sounds, *peace, peace*, though there be no peace, will be gratefully received. But let us not be our own enemies. To impose upon ourselves is all that we can do: *God is not mocked.* When all is said and done, *whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap,*

Some men venture to hope that *there is no hereafter*; no harvest to follow; or that though they persist in sowing to the flesh, yet they shall not of the flesh reap corruption: but this is a most forlorn hope. Unhappy men! Every thing around you proves that there is a God; and something within you, in spite of all your efforts to stifle its remonstrances, tells you, that you are accountable to him and must give an account before him. To you the words that I have read are particularly addressed. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap!*

Others who admit a future state, yet hope to escape the just reward of their evil deeds from an idea which they entertain of *the general mercy of God*. It is true God is merciful; but his mercy is not connivance. He is merciful; but it is only

through a mediator: while therefore you neglect his salvation there is no mercy for you. You confess not your iniquity upon the head of the substitute; therefore it will be found upon your own head. Your religion is no better than that of Cain, who brought an offering without a sacrifice: The Lord will not accept it. He is merciful; but it is to men of a broken and a contrite spirit. Of others he saith, *He that made them will not have mercy upon them; and he that formed them will shew them no favour.* O ye formalists—ye heathens under a christian name; the passage that I have read looks hard at you: *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

Others have derived a hope from the performance of certain *superstitious rites* or the *bestowment of a portion of their wealth on some religious object.* Much of this kind of delusion has been practised in popish countries. Men who have lived a life of injustice, or debauchery, or both, have hoped to balance accounts with the Almighty by performing a journey to the tomb of some departed saint, by building a church, or by endowing an hospital. It were well if this kind of self deception were confined to popish countries: but alas, it is natural to unrenewed minds of all nations and religions to substitute ceremony in the place of judgement, mercy, and the love of God; and to hope to escape the di-

vine displeasure by the works of their own hands. Are there any of this description here? We shall have a collection this evening for the printing of the New Testament in the Bengallee language. If I only wished for your money, I might say, Give, whatever be your motive! No, I am not so concerned for the salvation of the heathen as to be regardless of that of my own countrymen! I ask not a penny from such a motive: and moreover, I solemnly warn you that if you give all your substance in this way, it will avail you nothing *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

Finally, Others flatter themselves that their iniquity will not find them out seeing *Christ has died*. And true it is with regard to all who believe in him, and who *sow to the spirit*, that they will not be dealt with according to their deserts, but according to the merits of him in whom they have believed. Of this we shall have occasion to speak more particularly hereafter. At present let it suffice to observe, that unbelievers, who continue to *sow to the flesh* have no interest in this mercy. There might as well have been no Saviour, nay, better, so far as their future happiness is concerned, than a Saviour not believed in, loved, nor obeyed. Iniquity unlamented will inevitably be our ruin. It is as true as though Christ had never died, that *whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.*

It is a very serious and impressive truth which is here held up to us, THAT ALL WHICH IS DONE IN THIS LIFE IS PREPARATORY TO ANOTHER: OR THAT THE SORROWS AND JOYS OF A FUTURE WORLD BEAR A SIMILAR RELATION TO WHAT IS WROUGHT IN THIS, AS THE HARVEST BEARS TO THE SEED SOWN. This is the subject to which I wish at this time to call your serious attention: and surely I may presume that such an attention will not be withheld.

I. Let us begin on the subject of *sowing to the flesh*, and observe the relation which the future punishment of the wicked will bear to it.

The fruit which arises from sowing to the flesh is termed *corruption*. It does not consist in the destruction of being, but of well-being: in the blasting of peace, joy, and hope; and consequently in the enduring of tribulation, anguish, and everlasting despair.

This dreadful harvest will all originate in the sin which has been committed in the present life. Even here we see enough to convince us of its destructive tendency. We see intemperance followed with disease, idleness with rags, pride with scorn, and indifference to evangelical truth with the *belief of a lie*. We see nations desolated by wars, neighbourhoods and families rendered miserable by contentions, and the minds of indivi-

vine displeasure by the works of their own hands. Are there any of this description here? We shall have a collection this evening for the printing of the New Testament in the Bengallee language. If I only wished for your money, I might say, Give, whatever be your motive! No, I am not so concerned for the salvation of the heathen as to be regardless of that of my own countrymen! I ask not a penny from such a motive: and moreover, I solemnly warn you that if you give all your substance in this way, it will avail you nothing *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

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duals sinking under the various loads of guilt remorse and despair. Great is the misery of man upon him. Yet this is but the *blade* proceeding from this deadly seed; or at most the *ear*: the *full corn in the ear* is reserved for another state.

The scriptural representations of the wrath to come convey the idea not of torture inflicted by mere power, nor of punishment without respect to desert; but of bitter *weepings and wailings* in reflecting on the deeds done in the body. The punishment of the adulterer is described as a *bed*, a bed of devouring fire: the deceiver will find himself deceived: he that loved cursing, it shall come upon him, as oil into his bones: and they who continued to say unto God, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways, God will say unto them, Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I never knew you.

Future misery will greatly consist in reflection. Abraham said to the rich man, *Son remember!* If the memory could be obliterated there is reason to think hell would be extinguished: but it must remain.

There are four things in particular, pertaining to sin, which will continue to be the objects of reflection, and which therefore must prove the seeds of future misery.

1. The character of the Being against whom it has been committed.—If God had been wanting in justice or goodness; if his law had been what some have profanely said of it, a task-master, requiring brick without straw; if compliance with his will had been inconsistent with real happiness; if his invitations had been insincere, or his promises in any instance broken; if his threatenings had borne no proportion to the evil of the offence; or if in condemning the sinner he had availed himself of his being stronger than he,—his wrath might possibly have been endured. We can bear an unjust punishment better than a just one. The displeasure of a malignant being however it may injure us, does not bereave us of inward peace: it is the frown of goodness that is intolerable. To have incurred the displeasure of a God whose nature is LOVE must furnish reflections which cannot be endured.

2. The *folly* of it.—There are few things in the present state which sting the mind with keener sensations than the recollection that we have ruined ourselves by our own foolishness.

If we see a man eager in pursuing trifles, while he neglects things of the greatest importance; anxious to shun imaginary evils, and heedlessly plunging himself into real ones; all attention

to present indulgences, but regardless of his future interests; averse to what is his duty, and busying himself in things for which he is utterly incompetent, and which therefore he should commit to another; in fine, studying to displease his best friend, and to gratify his worst enemy,—we should without hesitation pronounce him a foolish man, and foretell his ruin. Yet all this is the constant practice of every unconverted finner; and if he persist in his folly, the recollection of it in a future state must overwhelm him with *shame and everlasting contempt*.

3. The aggravating circumstances which attend it. — The same actions committed in different circumstances possess very different degrees of guilt. The heathens in pursuing their immoralities are without excuse: but those who are guilty of the same things amidst the blaze of gospel light, are much more so. The profligate conduct of those young people whose parents have set them the example, is heinous: but what is it in comparison of that which is against example, and in spite of all the tears prayers and remonstrances of their godly relations? And what is that rejection of the gospel in the most ignorant part of the community in comparison of that which is accompanied with much hearing, reading, and reflection?

O my hearers! A large proportion of the sin

committed amongst us is of this description, it is against light, and against love. Wisdom cryeth in our streets, and understanding putteth forth her voice. The melting invitations, and solemn warnings of God are frequently sounded in our ears. If we should perish therefore, ours will not be the lot of common sinners: Our reflections will be similar to those of Chorazin and Bethsaida, whose inhabitants are represented as more guilty than those of Sodom and Gomorrha. To reject the Gospel, whether it be by a preference of gross indulgences, a fondness for refined speculations, or an attachment to our own righteousness, is to incur *the wrath of the Lamb*; and which is held up to us as the most dreadful of all wrath; as that from which unbelievers would be glad to be hid, though it were by being crushed beneath falling rocks, or buried in oblivion at the bottom of the mountains.

Finally, That in sin which will furnish matter for still further reflection will be its *effects on others connected with us*. It is a very affecting consideration that we are so linked together in society, that we almost necessarily communicate our dispositions, one to another. We draw and are drawn in both good and evil. If we go to heaven we are commonly instrumental in drawing some others along with us: and it is the same if we go to hell. If a sinner, when he has de-

stroyed his own soul, could say, 'I have injured only myself,' his reflections would be very different from what they will be.

The influence of an evil word or action in a way of example may surpass all calculation. It may occupy the attention of the sinner only for the moment; but being communicated to another, it may take root in him, and bring forth fruit a hundred fold. He also may communicate it to his connexions, and they to theirs; and thus it may go on to increase from generation to generation. In this world no competent idea can be formed of these effects; but they will be manifest in the next, and must needs prove a source of bitter reflection.

What sensations must arise in the minds of those whose lives have been spent in practising the abominable arts of seduction; whose words, looks, and gestures, like a pestilence that walketh in darkness, conveyed the poison of their hearts, and spread wide wasting ruin among the unguarded youth. There they will be *cast into a bed, and those who have committed adultery with them!*

See there too the ungodly parent, compassed about and loaded with execrations by his ungodly offspring, whom he has led on by his foul example, till both are fallen into perdition.

Nor is this all: there also will be seen the *blind leader of the blind, both fallen into the ditch*; the deluded preacher with his deluded hearers; each of whom, during life, were employed in deceiving the other. The mask is now stripped off. Now it appears to what issue all his soothing flatteries led; and what was his real character at the time, notwithstanding the decency of his outward demeanour. Now it is manifest that he who led not the sheep of Christ into the true pasture *entered not in by the door himself*. Ah now the blood of souls crieth for vengeance! Methinks I see the profligate part of his auditory, who died before him, surprized at his approach. 'That we, say they, who have lived in pleasure, and in wantonness should come to this place, is no wonder; but.....*Art THOU also become like one of us?*' I proceed—

II. To offer some remarks on *Sowing to the spirit*; or to point out the relation that subsists between what is done for Christ in this life and the joys of the life to come.

Before I attempt to establish this part of the subject it will be proper to form a clear and scriptural idea of it.

The relation between sowing to the spirit and everlasting life is as *real* as that between sowing to the flesh and everlasting death; it does

not follow however that it is in all respects the same. The one is a relation of *due desert*; but the other is not so. The scriptures, while they represent death as the proper *wages* of sin, have decided that eternal life is *the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

The leading principles necessary to a clear understanding of this subject may be stated under the following particulars—

1. Nothing performed by a creature, however pure, can properly merit everlasting life.— To merit at the hand of God would be to lay him under an obligation; and this would be the same thing as becoming profitable to him: but we are taught, when we have done all, to acknowledge that we are *unprofitable servants, having done no more than was our duty to do.*

2. God may freely lay himself under an obligation to reward the obedience of a holy creature with everlasting life; and his so doing may be fit, and worthy of him.— This fitness however arises not from the proportion between the service and the reward; but from such a conduct being adapted to express to creation in general the love which the Creator bears to righteousness, and to give encouragement to the performance of it. Such was the promise made to our first

* Rom. vi. 23.

parents, which, had they continued obedient, would have entitled them to the reward.

3. Man having sinned, the promised good is forfeited; and death becomes the only reward of which he is worthy. — *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* The law is become *weak through the flesh*, like a just judge who is incapable of acquitting a criminal, or of awarding life to a character who deserves to die.

4. God having designs of mercy notwithstanding, towards rebellious creatures, sent forth his Son to obey and suffer in their place; resolving to bestow eternal life on all that believe in him as the reward of his undertaking.— So well pleased was the Father with the obedience and sacrifice of Christ, that he not only set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, and made him head over all principalities and powers and every name that is named; but gave him the full desire of his heart, the salvation of his people. Hence all spiritual blessings are said to be given us *in him, through him, or for his sake*— *By means of his death* we receive the promise of *eternal inheritance*— and our salvation is considered as *the travail of his soul*, which it was promised him he should *see, and be satisfied*.* Mercy shewn to a sinner in this way is in effect saying ‘not for your sakes do I this, be it known unto you;

* Ephes. i. 1---13. 1 John ii. 12. Heb. ix. 15. Isai. liii. 11.

(be ashamed and confounded, O apostate creatures!) but to do honour to the interposition of my Son. Him will I hear!’

5. God not only accepts of all who believe in his Son, for his sake, but their services also become acceptable and rewardable through the same medium.— If our works while unbelievers had any thing truly good in them, which they have not, still it were impossible that they should be acceptable to God. “It does not consist with the honour of the majesty of the King of heaven and earth,” as a great writer expresses it,* “to accept
“ of any thing from a condemned malefactor,
“ condemned by the justice of his own holy law,
“ till that condemnation be removed.” But being *accepted in the beloved*, our works are accepted likewise. *The Lord hath respect unto Abel, and to his offering—He worketh in us that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ—Ye are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.†*

Being *accepted in the beloved*, our services become impregnated as it were with his worthiness, our petitions are offered up with the *much incense* of his intercession, and both are treated in a sort as though they were his. God in blessing and rewarding Abraham’s posterity is represented as blessing and rewarding him. *By myself*

* President Edwards’s *Sermons on Justification*.

† Gen. iv. 4. Heb. xiii. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 5.

*have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing, I will bless thee—and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.**

Accordingly, though it be said of Caleb, *because he had another spirit, and followed the Lord fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went, and his seed shall possess it*, yet it was no less a fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, than of that to him.† In like manner in approving the services of believers, God approves of the obedience and sacrifice of his Son, of which they are the fruits; and in rewarding them continues to reward him, or to express his well-pleasedness in his mediation.

This, brethren, I take to be for substance, the christian doctrine of rewards. I am persuaded it excludes boasting, and at the same time affords the greatest possible encouragement to be *constant, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.*

On this ground I proceed to establish the position with which I set out, *That the joys of futurity will bear a relation to what is done for Christ in the present life, similar to that between the seed and the harvest.*

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* Gen. xxii. 16---18.

† Numb. xiv. 23---24.

The same peace and joy in God which primarily arises from the mediation of Christ, may arise in a secondary sense from the fruits of it in our own souls. We know by experience, as well as by scripture testimony, that it is thus in the present world: hence that *great peace* which they enjoy who love the divine law; and that *satisfaction* which a good man is said to possess *from himself*:* and what good reason can be given why that which has been a source of peace and satisfaction here, should not be the same hereafter? If future rewards interfered with the grace of God, or the merit of Christ, present ones must do the same: for a difference in place or condition makes no difference as to the nature of things. Besides this, the Scripture expressly teach us, that the heavenly inheritance is *treasure laid up on earth*, the *crown* of the faithful, and the *reward* of those who have been hated, persecuted, and falsely accused for their Redeemer's sake.† The same apostle who teaches that salvation is of *grace*, and *not of works*, and that we are *accepted in the Beloved*, assures us that he *laboured*,—*that he might be accepted of the Lord*: for, he adds, *We must all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad.*‡ The addresses to the seven Asiatic Churches abound with the same sentiments.

* Psal. cxix. 165. Prov. xiv. 14.

† Matt. vi. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Matt. v. 12.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 9---10.

Eternal life, under various forms of expression, is there promised as the reward of them who should overcome.

This doctrine will receive farther confirmation if we consider wherein the nature of heavenly felicity consists. There can be no doubt but that an essential part of it will consist in the *divine approbation*; and this not merely on account of what we shall then be, but of what we have been and done in the present world. So far as we have sown to the Spirit, so far we shall reap the approbation of God; and which will be a harvest that will infinitely exceed all our toils. We are assured that for those who feared the Lord, and are concerned for his name in times of general declension, *a book of remembrance is written*; and, from the account given us by our Lord, it appears that its contents will be published in the presence of an assembled world. *The King will say unto those at his right-hand, Come ye blessed of my Father—I was an hungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

Another essential part of the heavenly felicity will consist in *ascribing glory to God and the Lamb*. It will be a source of joy unspeakable to perceive the abundance of glory which will

redound to the best of Beings from all the works of his hands. But if we rejoice that God is glorified, we cannot but rejoice in the recollection that we have been instrumental in glorifying him. It belongs to the nature of love to rejoice in an opportunity of expressing itself; and when those opportunities have occurred, to rejoice in the recollection of them. We are told that when David was anointed King in Hebron *there was joy in Israel.** Undoubtedly it must afford pleasure to all who had believed that God had appointed him to that office, and had felt interested for him during his affliction, to see him crowned by the unanimous consent of the tribes, let it be by whose instrumentality it might: but it must give peculiar joy to those worthies, who at an early period had cast in their lot with him, and fought by his side through all his difficulties. And as they would feel a special interest in his exaltation to the throne; so special honours were conferred on them under his government. It is, I apprehend, in allusion to this piece of sacred story that our Lord speaks in the manner he does to his apostles: *Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me: that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*†

* 1 Chron. xii. 40.

† Luke xxii. 28--30.

The satisfaction of the apostle Paul in having *fought the good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith*, did not consist in a pharisaical self-complacency; but in a consciousness of having in some good measure lived to his glory who died for him and rose again: and the same consciousness that rendered him happy, while in the prospect of his crown, must render him still more so in the possession of it.

It has been noticed that one great source of future misery to the sinner, will be the *effects* which his sin has produced upon others; and much the same may be observed concerning the righteous. We already perceive the tendency which a holy, upright, and benevolent conduct has to work conviction in the minds of men: but in the world to come the seed will have actually produced its fruits; and God being thereby glorified, the hearts of those who have contributed towards it must be filled with grateful satisfaction.

We can form no competent ideas at present of the effects of good, any more than of evil. What we do of either, is merely the kindling of a fire: how far it may burn we cannot tell, and generally speaking, our minds are but little occupied about it. Who can calculate the effects of a modest testimony borne to truth; of an importunate prayer for its success;

of a disinterested act of self-denial ; of a willing contribution ; of a seasonable reproof ; of a wholesome counsel ; of even a sigh of pity, or a tear of sympathy ? Each, or any of these exercises may be the means, in the Lord's hand, of producing that in the bosoms of individuals which may be communicated to their connections, and from them to theirs, to the end of time.

The gospel dispensation also is accompanied with peculiar encouragements for such exercises : it is that period in which the Messiah receives of *the travail of his soul* ; and consequently that in which his servants may warrantably hope for the greatest success. Under his reign we have the promise of the Spirit being *poured upon us from on high* ; and of various other blessings resulting from it : particularly, that *the wilderness shall become a fruitful field* ; that it shall be so fertile, that what has been before reckoned a *fruitful field*, shall in comparison with it be *counted for a forest* ; that *the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever* ; and finally, that the labours of the Lord's servants during these happy times, shall be like that of the husbandman, who *sows beside all waters*, or who cultivates a rich and well-watered soil.* It is also during the Messiah's reign, that we are warranted to expect great things to arise from small beginnings. *There shall be an handful of corn in*

* Isaiah xxxii. 15 - 20.

*the earth, upon the top of the mountains, the fruit whereof, shall shake like Lebanon.**

The influence of these effects on our present and future happiness, is clearly intimated by our Lord, where he represents the prophets as *sowing*, and the apostles as *reaping*, or *entering into their labours*.—*He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.*† The reapers in Christ's harvest *receive wages*, in the enjoyments which accompany their toils in the present life: they *gather fruit unto life eternal* in the effects of them contributing to enhance the blessedness of heaven: and this blessedness is not confined to those who have been the most successful in their day, but extends to others who have prepared the way before them. According to this representation, Isaiah and Jeremiah, who sowed in tears, will reap in joy; *rejoicing together* with Peter and Paul and John, and all the New Testament ministers; viewing in their successes the happy fruits of their own disregarded labours.

In this view the labours of Paul and his companions must be considered as extending in their effects to the very end of time. All the true religion that has blessed the different parts

* Psal. lxxii. 16.

† John iv. 36---38.

of the earth within the last seventeen hundred years has arisen from their labours ; and all the souls which have ascended to glory, or shall yet ascend out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, shall bless the Lord of the harvest for sending them. When we see these heroic worthies sowing the seed of life, reproached in one city, imprisoned in another, and stoned in another, we think it discouraging work. All that they could accomplish was but little in comparison of the multitudes of men who inhabited the earth ; and that little must be at great expence. It was a handful of corn cast upon the top of a mountain ; a most unpromising soil. They indeed saw that the hand of the Lord was with them ; but probably they had no conception of the extent to which the effects of their labours would reach. If Paul and Silas rejoiced and sang praises in the prison of Philippi, what would have been their joy, could they have foreseen that myriads of myriads in this European quarter of the world would receive the testimony which they should leave behind them, and follow them to glory ?

But all these effects are manifest to them in the heavenly world. There they see the harvest which had arisen from the handful of corn, waving before the wind, like the trees of the vast and conspicuous forest of Mount Libanus. Every hour, if I may so speak, souls are arriving at

those happy regions, who hail them as their spiritual fathers, and who shall be their crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

The joy of the apostles will not prevent later labourers from possessing the immediate fruit of their toils, any more than that of the prophets will prevent them from possessing theirs: *both they that sow and they that reap will rejoice together.*

Nor is this encouraging truth to be confined to the apostles, or to men of eminence. He who received but two talents had the approbation of his Lord, equally with him who had received five. The reward as promised in the Gospel will not be so much according to the talents we possess, as the use we make of them; nor so much in respect of our success, as of our fidelity. Many a servant of Christ has spent the greater part of his life with but little apparent success. His charge, it may be, was small at the beginning, and he has not been able to enlarge it. He has witnessed but few appearances of a divine change in his congregation; and some of those, who for a time afforded him hope, have turned back. Under such circumstances his heart has often sunk within him: often has he sighed in secret, and thought within himself, I am a vessel in which the Lord taketh no pleasure! But if under all this, he be faithful to his trust, and preserve

a single eye to the glory of God, his labours will not be lost. The seed which he has sown may spring up after his decease; or he may have prepared the way for another more successful: and when all shall meet in a future state, he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together.

Neither is this subject to be confined to ministers. As in Christ's harvest there is employment for every description of labourers, so there is reason to believe that every thing done for him is productive of some good effect; and will in some way glorify his name; which cannot but yield a joyful satisfaction to those who love him. How grateful are the recollections of a godly parent, when upon his dying bed he is able to say to his children, 'I have taught you the good and the right way—the things which you have heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.' And though he may not witness those effects which would have rejoiced his heart in this world, yet his labour will not be lost. He may at the last be able to present them, saying, 'Here am I, and the children which the Lord hath given me.' Or if some should not be gathered, yet his judgment is with the Lord, and his work with his God.

What a satisfaction must it afford to those who have willingly contributed in any form to

so glorious a cause as that of Christ: a cause which he founded by the shedding of his blood; a cause to which all the tribes of martyrs cheerfully sacrificed their lives: a cause, in fine, by the prevalence of which the name of God is glorified, and the salvation of our fellow-sinners accomplished!—I close with a few reflexions.

First, We learn from this subject, how to estimate the importance of our present conduct. We are fearfully made, but still more fearfully situated. Every thing we do is a seed of futurity, and is daily ripening into heaven or hell. It is here we receive the stamp or impression for the whole of our existence. Is it possible that with a proper sense of this truth we should trifle with time, or lavish its precious moments in idleness or folly?

Secondly, By this also, we may estimate the folly of hypocrisy. All the labour of a man to appear what he is not, is making preparation for his own confusion. What should we think of a husbandman who sows cockle instead of barley; and who, having by early rising and performing his labour in the dark, deceived his neighbours, should congratulate himself for his ingenuity? Foolish man, we should say, of what account is it to his neighbour in comparison of what it is to himself? It will soon appear what he has been doing!

Finally, Let us never forget, that whatever encouragements are afforded us, they are altogether of grace, and through a Mediator. There is no room for pharisaical pride; and if such a spirit be at the root of our labours, it will prove *as rottenness, and the blossom shall go up as dust.**

Do any enquire, *What they must do, that they may work the works of God?* The answer is, *This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent.*† This is the first and chief concern, without which all others will be of no account. While you either openly reject Christianity, or imbibe another gospel, which is not the gospel of Christ, the curse of the Almighty is upon thy head, and all thy works are no other than *sowing to the flesh*. Come off, without farther delay, come off from that fatal ground. Renounce thy self-dependencies, and submit to the righteousness of God; then every thing will be in its proper place. The curse shall no longer be upon thee, nor upon any thing which thou doest. The Lord will rejoice over thee to do thee good. Thou mayest *eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works.*

* Isaiah v. 24.

† John vi. 28---29.

